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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000896

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ECIN](#) [PREL](#) [EU](#) [TU](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA STILL UNDECIDED ON TURKISH EU MEMBERSHIP,
DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEBATE EXPECTED

REF: STATE 204758

Classified By: DCM Scott N. Thayer for Reason 1.4(b).

1. (C) DCM raised reftel message on Turkey's EU accession with MFA State Secretary Ivan Korcok, MFA Acting General Director for European Affairs Frantisek Ruzicka, and Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister Milan Jezovica on September 28 and 29. Ruzicka said Slovakia was supportive in principle, although concerned that Turkey would soak up EU structural funds. On the other hand, he recognized that accession talks would take time, which meant that the Slovak share of structural funds was safe for the coming EU financial period. Ruzicka's comments meshed with his previous statements on the issue, when he said Slovakia supported Turkish EU membership but only if Turkey were held to the same high standards of political and economic reform that Slovakia had been required to meet.

2. (C) Korcok was less forthcoming about Slovakia's position, saying Ruzicka's "Yes, but..." could also be "No, but..." Jezovica dismissed Ruzicka's concerns about the financial aspect of Turkish accession, saying Slovakia will support Turkey's European character. (Comment: We note this is not the same thing as supporting EU membership.) Jezovica agreed Central European countries know the positive effects of EU membership on domestic policies as a catalyst for reform and modernization and he predicted the Commission report would be positive. He admitted Turkey was important in NATO and would be helpful in resolving issues in the Middle East. But he stopped short of expressing full support.

3. (C) Jezovica said Prime Minister Dzurinda would soon make a statement about his Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) political party's support for Turkey's EU accession. This statement will likely spur debate within and among Slovak political parties on where Slovakia will stand in the run-up to the December 17 Council meeting.

4. (C) Comment: We will continue to raise the issue with Slovak officials and politicians, offering solid arguments for a positive answer on Turkey's EU accession. The domestic debate Jezovica suggested needs to take place before the GOS will take a definitive stand.

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